

Field Report Shona Robinson

I very much enjoyed my research stay abroad in Konrad Hochedlinger's lab in the Harvard Stem Cell Institute at Massachusetts General Hospital.

When I first joined the lab, everyone was very welcoming and I was introduced to everyone. My supervisor spent a lot of time walking me through the lab, all of the equipment and teaching me about the project available for me to choose to work on, since the original project was no longer feasible.

I learned a great deal from my research internship. Since it was a prestigious lab, I had a lot of opportunities to learn techniques that I may not have had the opportunity to try somewhere else. For example, I was able to get certified to work with lab animals (mice), which is very important in this field.

The internship was very challenging. Because this was a prestigious lab at Harvard University, the expectations were very high and every member of the lab was very driven, and hardworking. I found it a bit intimidating and hard to keep up. However, there was a lot of support available from the lab members.

I found the institution to be of a very high quality, as they had a lot of resources available in terms of lab equipment, knowledge and connections. There were workshops and classes held by the institution for things like CV writing, job interviews, etc. Every week, there would be a lab meeting where one lab member would present their work to all of the other members of the lab over breakfast. Everyone would ask questions and provide feedback on their work. It was very inclusive, and we all got the chance to present our work, which was very useful for helping me to write up my thesis. We also spent time outside of the lab socially.

I got on very well with everyone in the lab, and met a lot of people from other labs in the same institution. I made some useful contacts with other students, post docs, and PIs, all of whom have given me some great advice regarding my career.

For future Marshall Plan students, I would recommend talking to as many people as possible, in order to make friends, professional connections, and to learn more about your field of interest, and things to do socially. I would also recommend trying to find

out about the general culture and working environment of the institution they are planning on going to, to make sure they will be comfortable and happy, as otherwise it will make learning and working harder.

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